NEW LITERARIA-
An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities
Volume 8, No. 1, March, 2026, PP. 62-78
ISSN: 2582-7375
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.48189/nl.2026.v08i1.009
www.newliteraria.com

The Speculative Palate: Culinary Memory and Diasporic Histories in Fictional Futures

Aishwarya Mehta
Research Scholar, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, (Central University), Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract

This research paper examines how speculative fiction engages with food as a mnemonic device, historiographical archive, and cultural repository to encode diasporic histories in the face of ecological catastrophe and social upheaval. Through a close reading of Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* (2009), Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993), and Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985), the paper discusses the idea of the "speculative palate" where recipes, foraging, seeds, and rituals encode memory, resistance, and futurity against the forgetting of capitalist amnesia.

Engaging with gastronomy studies, memory studies, diaspora studies, and speculative estrangement, the paper proposes a culinary historiography as a form of counter-archive of embodied continuity. Atwood's Gods Gardeners engage in biopolitical resistance through seed-saving and posthuman care; Butler's Afrofuturist seeds reflect trauma even as they produce Earthseed ethics; Le Guin's Kesh feasts mirror utopian abundance through ethnographic ritual. Speculative food fictions serve social imaginaries, modelling sustainability, interdependence, and hope for displaced futures. Those edible stories do not facilitate the cultural forgetting, but they give expression to the ethics of care and sustainability. In conclusion, the theorized research will reveal how speculative food narratives serve to not only feed bodies, but social imaginaries in order to create futures in remembrance, continuity and hope.

Keywords: Diaspora, Culinary Memory, Speculative Fiction, Historiography, Cultural Continuity.

Introduction:

In an era of worsening crisis of the planet and around the world, few questions are more fundamental than that of the persistence of cultures. Speculative fiction provides, as a mode of "cognitive estrangement" (Suvin, 1979, p. 4), a privileged laboratory for this question in which the present is defamiliarized in the interests of imagining the possibilities of tomorrow. Within this genre, sometimes food is not simply the fuel of sustenance but a concept that offers an

Article History: Received: 27 November 2025. Revised: 18 February 2026. Accepted: 18 February 2026. First published: 01 March, 2026.

Copyright: © 2026 by the *author/s*.

License: Distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Published by: Adrija Press, India.
Citation: Mehta, Aishwarya. (2026). The Speculative Palate: Culinary Memory and Diasporic Histories in Fictional Futures. *Newliteraria Journal* 8:1, 62-78. https://dx.doi.org/10.48189/nl.2026.v08i1.009

opportunity to tell a good story to interrogate identity, memory and resistance. According to Annie Potts (2019) in *'The Material Food Culture of the Novel'* "food is never just food; it is a condensed social fact" (42), an idea to which speculative authors push to the limit. This paper explores the literary construction of what can be referred to as a speculative palate: the purposeful use of foodways in speculative fiction as a way of inscribing and carrying diasporic histories and cultural memories against forgetfulness.

This paper argues on three foundational texts that represent a spectrum of future possibilities: the corporate eco-dystopia of Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* (2009), the anarchic apocalypse of Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993), and the anthropological utopia of Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985) each one of them project the food as central to the continuation of culture and the way this occurs is through the identity of recipes, meals and agriculture as ritual to nourish their bodies but also the social imaginary, keeping the social group alive in the face of ecological crisis, mass migration and systemic collapse. We insist that such writers activate their culinary in such act of conduct as a kind of counter-narrative, which produce what Pierre Nora (1989) would call lieux de mémoire (sites of memory), which functions against amnesiac forces of capitalism and calamity. In handling food as history of history underlies that treats food in this way, they subvert official histories and imply that the presence of remembered recipes to rival the presence of remembered politics.

Theoretical Framework: Culinary Historiography, Diaspora, and the Speculative Novum

Placing these texts at the juncture of food studies, memory studies and diaspora theory enables this triangulated framework to establish what may be called culinary historiography, where food is simultaneously sustenance, archive and speculative epistemology in an attempt to capture the function of food in these speculative texts. Within the field of food studies, it is pertinent that food is not described as an inactive symbolism but rather is alleged to be an active storyteller able to disclose embodied histories, hierarchies, and relations of power, not as a decorative emblem (Counihan and van Esterik, 2013; Heldke, 2003). Memory studies support this perspective and emphasize the connection between food practices and the permissiveness of rituals, repetition, and sensory memory as a wealth of 'cultural food memory' (Assmann 2011,6; Holtzman 2006; Sutton 2001). Diaspora theory teaches us to complicate the picture still further by foregrounding the migratory, othering, and hybridisation (and remediation of belonging) of culinary practices across processes of displacement in usually counter-archiving ways against processes of erasure (Brah, 1996). Where speculative fiction involves the use of food as novum-food that is bioengineered as sustenance for humanity, food that is post-scarcity seed plus ritualized eating-it creates cognitive estrangement that emphasizes the embedded ecological, political, and cultural stakes of every day eating (Suvin, 1979; Moylan, 2018). Food, in this way, becomes historiographic in speculative contexts: of acquiring back suppressed past, of critiquing fraught food systems of the present very and imagining futurities delighted in notions of sovereignty, resilience and relational care.

Foodways and Embodied Memory

Culinary memory is the term used to describe the embodied and sensorial processes by which histories, values, social relations are carried out and passed down from their own social context, through recipes, rituals and sharing meals. It represents a form of memory that is inscribed not just in written texts, but in the bodily gestures, tastes, textures and smells - a body of memory that is performed rather than merely stored in written form. David Sutton (2001), in Remembrance of Repasts, defines this phenomenon as "gustatory memory," which is a mode of knowledge that is borne and remembered in the light of sensory experience. Such memory, argue Sutton, matters as a "habit-memory at the very heart of the reproduction of culture" (p. 7). In this sense, food no longer is merely a source of sustenance but, above all, consuming is

a means of cultural continuity especially in contexts where written documentation is fragile or non-existent.

In particular, embodied culinary memories are very durable and transferable. As Fisher (1943) eloquently put it, "First we eat, then we do everything else" (p. 353), meaning that eating is the first layer where identity, sociality and meaning-making are founded. Through the transmission of the tasks of cooking and tasting, their belonging, whether to a family, a community or a homeland, is constantly asserted. This idea is reintroduced in recent scholarship by considering that food is an intimate historiographical medium through which communities interact their relationship with displacement, trauma and memory (Holtzman, 2020; Parasecoli, 2019). Therefore, culinary memory is particularly important in diasporic, marginal and colonized communities when access to formal or institutional archives are unreachable, were destroyed or biased throughout history (Boym, 2001).

Pierre Nora's great distinction between milieux de memoire (environments of memory) and lieux de memoire (places of memory) is a useful way of expanding the theoretical framing of foodways. Milieux de memoire implies the living memory that is ingrained in the daily practice: recipes memorized without measurement, transmission of using utensils for cooking, modes of the seasonality related to the agricultural seasons (Nora,1989, p.07). By contrast, lieu de memoires are born out of the sense of a collective memory in straight some sort of threat; they are conscious-created sites, cookbooks, commemorative meals, or ambiguous recreations which stabilize identity against disappearance. Food can occupy either category simultaneously: While a dish may be a part of everyday cultural heritage, at a time of crisis it may be a political act of remembrance.

Food serves this two-fold purpose in most of the literary and cultural narratives. Indeed, in contemporary novels and those that in particular are attributable to histories of migration, caste trauma, war, or colonization, foodways are storied repositories of embodied memory containing what historical accounts have left out. The food-based memory is resistant to acts of forgetting by making the day-to-day activities of kneading dough, roasting spices and preparing ceremonial foods into mnemonic rituals. These deeds salvage broken histories and envision the futures occurred through dignity and continuation. This way, foodways and embodied memory have become means by which culture may overcome its writings. They place the body into the position of archive, narration and witness in front position. As recent scholarship of the study of food suggests, culinary memory is anything but nostalgic, but is a performative mode of agency and identity building indeed (Ray, 2016). Carrying with it emotion, tradition, and survival, food turned into an element of living historical-writer archiving, which gave the body and the collective memory nourishment.

Diaspora, Identity, and the Culinary Imaginary

Diaspora theory offers a framework for considering the fracturing of identity through displacement, but at the same time creates the new cultural formations that find a new ontology in memory, belonging and embodied practice. Foundational work by Stuart Hall (1994) has established cultural identity as a matter not of some stable or inherited essence, but "a matter of becoming as well as being" (p. 225). For the diasporic subject this becoming is mediated frequently through the everyday practices (where food becomes emblematic as a site of the preservation and reinvention of a cultural meaning). It is under this sense that the culinary realm becomes a space for the constant rehearsal, Défense and reinvention of an identity in relation to geographical rupture and cultural marginalization.

An extension of this thinking was offered by Paul Gilroy (1993) who theorized the black Atlantic, in which he added to it the concept of a mobile "cultural repertoire" that travels with the displaced, informing a "changing same," (p. 38) as he famously names it. Recipes and

kitchen techniques and food rituals move around global borders in the same way people do, but they are inevitably altered by contact with new ecologies, new political conditions, and through intercultural exchange. This process is an important recognition that diaspora cuisines are not just the vestige of their once-lost homeland but living archives of processes of cultural negotiation. Cooking becomes like a practice of survival and continuity in which the diasporic communities act to keep a relation to their ancestral history as they negotiate a new survival in new environments.

The role that culinary practice plays in the formation of diasporic identity, this becomes even more heightened thanks to the emotional and sensory dimension of it. Abbots refers to food as an "intimate and visceral medium" with the ability to transfer memory not just without implicating the cognitive nature of the experience undergoing it (Abbots, 2017, p. 5). Taste, texture and smell re-animate histories that may be otherwise impossible to access or silenced by colonialism, racism or forced displacement, which unravels intergenerational transmission. Here, food is used as an archive and affective technology, allowing the relationships between past and present, between homeland and host land, self and community.

Avtar Brah's (1996) concept of "diaspora space" offers an analytical framework in which to make sense of how identities within the diaspora are constantly negotiated in interactions between migrants, indigenous populations and wider socio-political structures. Diaspora space is not spatial but rather relational and processual. It is in this space that culinary imaginaries, shared memories, sensual associations and symbolic meanings attached to food, play a vital and, in the creation of community and generate belonging. In differentiating fiction, reactions and responses repulsed against a new enunciation of imaginary settings, such as Butler does speculating on imagined futures, we find our communal preparation of erased of register meals and offer as sharing experience food by means of mechanisms to emerge discs new diasporic identities. Culinary labour is converted into political and cultural acts whereby collective memory is solidified, agency is claimed and other ways of surviving and maintaining solidarities are imagined. Therefore, diaspora, identity, and the culinary imaginary are closely and profoundly integrated raising sense of the capacity of food to function in one's territory as a location of cultural persistence, adaptation, and futurity. Through the forms of embodied memory, affective transmission, and communal ritual, culinary practices help diasporic subjects to remake identity in conditions that were conditioned by the generative legacy of displacement, fragmentation, and historical violence, and that make nourishment itself a form of cultural resistance.

The Speculative Novum and Cognitive Estrangement

The unique power of speculative fiction to interrogate structures which are often taken as given lies in its formal power to imagine things differently. Darko Suvin's foundational theorization projects the genre in terms of the mechanism of the novum - a scientifically or imaginatively plausible innovation that generates a state of "cognitive estrangement" which allows readers to recognize their own world as strange, and therefore critique-able (Suvin, 1979, p. 4). Recent scholars continue to love this framework, especially for the ecological socio-political readings of speculative literature (Luckhurst, 2020; Rieder, 2017). Within this analytical frame, food brings into being not just motif and setting but a wilfully estranging mechanism that reframes the way in which systems of nourishment, scarcity, identity and survival are culturally constructed.

This is reinforced by the fact that what is food in all the texts under consideration is the novum: heirloom seeds in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* which break up the logic of the corporate food monopolies and climate-induced scarcity, where agriculture becomes a site of resistance and intergenerational hope (Canavan, 2016). Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam trilogy creates food as a place where the ethical, ecological, and evolutionary futures are

contended over via the contradictions revealed through foraging practices and lab-engineered food systems (Atwood, 2013). In works by Ursula K. Le Guin, ritualised feasts, often given distinct sustenance via anthropological detail, creates ceremonial memory of the traditions labour practice and cosmologies that will not be erasing away in this speculative world. Through each scenario, the food system does not just come to support narrative environments but becomes an estranging device by looking back at various anxieties present in the time period with regards to food sovereignty, cultural loss, and ecological precarity.

This dynamic intersects fruitfully with Tom Moylan's (2018) idea of the "critical utopia" where the narratives of the speculative are both a rejection of perfect futures, and a revelation of contradictions in the strive towards more just futures. The stage of food is novum and so it is possible to arrange these contradictions: it will be able to cultivate or to commodify the culture, combat for sustaining life or to on survival as the weapon. Recent eco-critical scholarship has suggested that speculative fiction is a genre that materializes these tensions and displays food infrastructures and their consequences unique (Gomel, 2023; Johns-Putra, 2019). Accordingly, the alienation that is produced by food practices is not a matter of special effects alone, of theme, but rather one of thought - it makes the readers reconsider their own situation in exposure to exploitative agricultural systems, extractive capitalism as well as frail ecologies. Through this lens, speculative fiction becomes historiographic and speculative at once in the way it excavates forgotten or repressed food histories while projecting possible futures constituted by alternative relations to land, technology, and community. As novum, food empowers speculative fiction to do critical work in unseating the naturalized, and in imagining the needed. The estrangement it produces is not alienation but an ethical space of clarity: an invitation to rethink how nourishment, culture, power, and survival might be reorganized in the world beyond the text.

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood*: Biopolitics and the Counter-Archive

Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* (2009) constructs a speculative future in which food becomes one of the central mechanisms through which power is organized, contested, and remembered. Set in a world devastated by genetic engineering, environmental collapse, and corporate rule, the text dramatizes what scholars identify as biopolitical regulation where bodies, environments, and biological life processes become targets of control (Foucault, 1978). Food production in the novel is no longer a cultural or ecological activity but a proprietary area controlled by bioengineering big business. In this regard, the politics of food is not only about survival; it is about controlling the desire, memory, and identity.

In this dystopian world, Atwood puts into play resistance by other epistemologies of food and ecological commitment. The eco-religious community known as the God's Gardeners is representative of what Nixon (2011) calls "counter-archives of survival slow, embodied, and memory-based knowledge systems [that] challenge extractivist and profit-driven models of food production." Their practices of seed preservation, ritual ecological learning and plant-based subsistence work against what Couldry and Mejias (2019) term as "data colonialism"; here, transported into biological life itself. Thus, it makes food a weapon of domination as well as a means of refusal. The novel's message is probably that understands that technological development is not the only element of future human and planetary survival, but ethical, relational, and restorative interactions with food ecologies. Through this tension, Atwood has placed food at the interception of the biopolitics and environmental justice and speculative futurity.

Corporate Dystopia and the Biopolitics of Food

In Atwood's imagined near future, food becomes one of the important sites where corporate power asserts its power over the lives of ordinary people. The CorpSeCorps Atwood's

Corporate security amalgamation controls the food system through surveillance, synthetic bioengineering and economic dependency. Products like "SecretBurgers," which have ingredients purposely disguised, point to the degree to which we have alienated consumption from its origin and meaning (Atwood, 2009, p. 33). This resonates with the theorizing of power by the German-French philosopher Michel Foucault, who, in his book The History of Sexuality, characterized biopower as a form of governance, controlling population through the control of biological necessity, including nourishment. By owning the means by which food is produced, corporations are in effect in control over who eats, what they eat and ultimately how life itself will be sustained.

Nick Couldry and Ulises Mejias's idea of "colonization of human life" under data capitalism (2019) can be drawn as a modern-day parallel case to Atwood satirical but chilling image of bio-corporate dependency. The novel amounts to a prediction of a world where the commodification of food will not just result in a lack of food sovereignty, but in the obliteration of cultural memory what scholars refer to as weaponization of forgetting (de Sousa Santos, 2014). Corporate food system ensuring mono-culture of dependency curtailing multifarious ecologic & cuisine knowledge system.

Opposing this corporate dystopia are the God's Gardeners, which is based not on technological violence, but ecological ethics and embodied memory. Their seed banks, hymns and the practice of rituals resurrect the so-called food sovereignty of the right of the communities to decide their own food system by ecological and cultural continuity, according to the world food policy researcher Vandana Shiva (2024). Their practices are an illustration of the invisible harms of corporate environmental manipulation over the long-term and are an example of what Nixon (2011) calls "slow violence" where environmental degradation happens at an incremental and invisible pace. Their philosophy brings the interdependence of relationships, ethics that are non-human relations and cultivating in a manner that is sustainable. challenge the logics of neoliberal extractives.

Ultimately, *The Year of the Flood* looks at the fight for food as the fight for futurity. Food in the process becomes the medium of enacting competing visions of the human: one consigned to corporate domination and dispossessed, and the other who is ecologically sound, celebrates memory and justice. In setting up this conflict, Atwood's speculatory world is rendered a cautionary archive one that questions whether survival is to be even defined by the engineered dependence or recovery of food as a cultural, ethical and ecological commons.

Culinary Practices as Mnemonic Resistance

The identity of the God's Gardeners is created through their conscious and ritualized food practices, from foraging to rooftop gardening, vegetarianism, seed saving and strict food ethics. These practices are not incidental but integral and central epistemological practices through which memory, ecology consciousness and resistance is created. In a world with what academics are now calling ecological forgetting (Ghosh, 2018), the God's Gardeners make every meal a reversal of the amnesia. Their foodways function as what Connerton (1989) calls "embodied memory" in which repetition through performance functions as a mode of cultural survival.

Accompanied with hymns dedicated to ecological saints' figures as is later interpreted with views of Saints Rachel Carson, the ritual feasts turn consumption into remembrance. Eating is of moral continuity and not the satisfaction of the body. This ethic is enunciated in teaching of Adam One: "To us, the Gardeners, it has been entrusted that we should know that all life is one, and that all our fellow creatures are our kind" (Atwood, 2009, p. 129). The table as a space of pedagogical intimacy can, then, well be connected to the notion of ethical entanglement with nonhuman living that is en-acted as opposed to being only recollected.

Likewise, the preparation of food with foraged plants, heirloom, are equally good for survival and situated ecological learning. Indeed, according to one Gardener, "They taught us to make use of the memory because nothing written down could be trusted." The spirit goes from mouth to mouth (Atwood, 2009, p.45). This oral form of transmission is a threat to the institutional knowledge systems which are highly textual, commodified and extractive. Their knowledge of food, thus becomes an archive in the dynamic of life - a repository of knowledge that is capable of growing and adapting, and surviving through partaking rather than simply by being preserved.

The latter kind of edible protest resonates with the idea of "infrapolitics" presented by James C. Scott, in other words, the resistances waged by the subaltern masses in their every-day, day-to-day actions. Cooking, foraging and seed-keeping are, therefore, minute acts of disobedience in the face of the corporate bio-capitalism and eco-destruction. A variety of ecocritical readings on place-based culture that have emerged in recent years suggest that these kinds of practices offer a form of "slow activism" in which sustainability comes less about political sloganizing and more about living into their lives. Finally, Gods Gardeners culinary practice is a kind of mnemonic record keeping by means that the ecological memory is retained-not in monotonous writing or institutions, but through the silent and constant repetitive records of eating, teaching, and taking care. Their foodways are manifestations of counter-hegemonic ethics of care, based on interdependence, humility and life preservation in its most tenuous forms.

A Posthuman Ethic of Care

The ethos of the Gardeners essentially throws out the anthropocentric world view and brings front and centre human entanglement with the more-than-human world. Their refusal to eat engineered, corporatized food becomes their refusal to submit to the neoliberal biopolitics of commodification of life, reduction of ecosystems to the properties of extractive enterprises and food production as a corporate surveillance and control site. Such refusal is not just a matter of diet. It is an ideology and has ecological. It reveals violence inherent in what Wolfe (2010) describes as the "anthropocentric moral hierarchy" (p. 8) in which only human life is deemed worthy of ethical attention. Instead, the food choices of the Gardeners point to other ways of co-existing around reciprocity, slowness and attention.

This is a philosophy of diet, that fulfils the demands of Donna Haraway's call to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016, p. 4), a concept that demands the acceptance of interdependence instead of an exit or purity (as in technological escape). Haraway's idea of "making kin" (Haraway, 2016, p. 2) is made especially poignant in the rituals of the Gardeners, in which seeds, insects, soil and fungi are not resources to exploit but relational beings. Their practices draw back on Tsing's argument that for members of the human species to survive in the Anthropocene, they must learn from multispecies assemblages. It requires living precariously, instead of dominating or transcending it.

In this frame, food is a sort of extension of the idea of kinship and a tool or means by which the act of care is realised. Saving heirloom seeds, such as this is on the one hand not a practice of nostalgia but of revolution. It defies the capitalism of monoculture editions, as well as claims biodiversity as one's memory, continuity and corporeal futurity. Similarly singing hymns to bees or doing liturgies in as contributions to compost is refuting food labour as ritual of care. This is alternative spiritual ecology based on feminist and posthuman ethics. As Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) states: Care is "not just a moral position but a material practice of staying in touch with the messy and interdependent world" (p. 3). Situated, in some ways, within the dystopian picture of the narrative world, one in which the ecological diversity of the planet is endangered, the very biological life to it, by the encroaching corporate control of that world,

the gestures - small, regular, embodied - are made powerful sites of resistance. Through food practices the Gardeners practice what Braidotti (2019) describes as an "affirmative ethics" which is based not on fear or scarcity, but on collective vulnerability and collective survival (p. 47). So, food is not even accessory or background. On this way, food becomes the primary vehicle with which one maintains an ethical relationship with the world, modelling an ethic of care out of posthumanism needed to visualise liveable futures that move beyond extractive capitalism.

Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*: Afrofuturism, Trauma, and the Ethics of Care

The novel *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler offers a very strong case of Afrofuturism, in which climate disaster, racialized violence, and economic disaster creates a rich environment of displacement, precarity, and trauma, in which food is not only sustenance, but also a moral, political, ontological resource in which or against which to survive. In the world Butler is describing, food scarcity ends up being a mechanism of the power and subjugation of who lives and who doesn't, who is forced to repeatedly engage in the cycles of extraction and vulnerability. Researchers have indicated that Butler is predicting the current environmental worries and hunger is a weaponized state representing environmental injustice and racist capitalism. Lauren Olamina's creation of Earthseed transforms this landscape of deprivation into an ethic of communal resilience where the sharing of food can be an act of care, kinship, and world building. This is familiar to emergent thinking from the Afrofuturism of future imaginaries that are not seen as people fleeing oppression but rather as speculative practices for the repair of past histories of dispossession and theorization of relational ethics (Eshun, 2020, p. 13). Olamina's capacity to repeatedly refuse to huddle up resources is an imitation of survivance through interdependence, arguing back against neoliberal notions of individualism. Through gardens, seed saving and communal eating, in the novel creates what scholars call a "Black ecological futurity" (Bruno, 2024, p.271) where care is being practiced materially in the form of food, healing and mutual aid. Thus, the story that Butler Wednesday's story constructs for food is not only one about its role as the foundational for biological life, but also about its role as the ethical foundational for a new communal identity - a new identity one based on reciprocity, repair and radical hope.

Apocalypse and the Diasporic Journey

In *Parable of the Sower* (1993), Octavia E. Butler created the protagonist of this tale, Lauren Olamina, a young black woman with a disruptive condition called "hyperempathy," who runs from her dying, walled community and begins a journey north-ward through violent change in America. As she travels, Lauren starts to assemble around her a multi-ethnic, multi-class group of survivors and develop a beginnings movement called Earthseed, whose central and circular mantra asserts that "God Is Change" and that the final human destiny is "to take root among the stars."

This narrative is deeply diasporic in character. The collapse of Lauren's gated enclave echoes the Middle Passage of forced movement, the later Great Migration of African Americans out of the South, and broader patterns of exile and resettlement. The apocalypse here is not simply environmental or social collapse, but a rupture of community, identity, and home. Lauren's exodus shares with diasporic journeys the necessity of forging new identity amid dislocation. In constructing Earthseed, she replaces the old certainties of place, faith, and belonging with a theology of fluid adaptation capturing what diasporic subjects often experience: the need to survive, transform, and create community from the ruins of displacement.

Moreover, the novel wholly falls within the tradition of Afrofuturism. In fact, Alondra Nelson defines Afrofuturism as being an enabling way to "imagine possible futures through a

Black cultural lens" while always "reconfiguring the past and the future to reimagine the present." Nelson (2002) locates Afrofuturism as an infrastructure for the imagination whereby Black diasporic peoples re-narrativize history, technology, and destiny (Nelson, 2002, p. 199). More recently, scholarship has highlighted how Butler's *Parable of the Sower* deploys an Afrofuturist device in whose dystopian horizon lies a hopeful, adaptable community among the stars (Colmon, 2020, p.90).

In light of this, the apocalyptic framing of the novel functions less as terminal destruction and more as radical possibility; destruction of the familiar enables forging new identities, new communities, and new futures. Lauren's northward movement is at once literal journey and symbolic exile. Her calling to "take root among the stars" gestures toward diasporic aspiration: migrating not only across geographies but also across cosmologies and cultural frames. In this sense, Butler mobilises apocalypse as the moment of diaspora and reinvention, and Earthseed as the religious-cultural formation that emerges in that space. In sum, the novel foregrounds how crisis catalyses diaspora, identity-making, and future-visioning within an Afrofuturist matrix. Lauren's journey becomes a diasporic narrative of rupture, migration, and community-building that reimagines home not simply as place, but as movement and transformation.

Seeds as Diasporic Carriers and Archives of Trauma

The most potent recurring symbol in *Parable of the Sower* is that of the seed. Throughout the novel, Lauren Olamina carries seeds with her on purpose in any travel, thereby making an object associated literally with horticulture into a metaphor of diasporic survival, memory, and futurity. Seeds embody a paradox: minuscule and fragile, yet holding enormous potential and a generational continuity within them. In carrying seeds, Lauren performs an embodied practice of memory, one mirroring cultural histories of displaced peoples who preserve their identities through portable archives of knowledge.

Within diasporic studies, seeds have been theorized as repositories of history, genetics, and cultural belonging. The process of migration, be it forced or by choice, often entails the abandonment of land, place and material attachments of identities. But seeds will be affected - they will be carried away - they will be hidden in pockets, hidden in clothing, hidden in hair, hidden in memory. Lauren plants these seeds in foreign soil as a material act of hope: refusal of displacement, violence and ecological collapse to engender any break in cultural continuity. The seed becomes hence what anthropologist Anna Tsing (2015) calls a 'carrier of more-than-human histories' (p. 132) involving an ecological survival in connection with a human resilience.

Historically, this symbolic resonation has the lived experience of the African diaspora as a basis. Culinary historian Jessica B. Harris writes in *High on the Hog* (Harris, 2011, p. 29), about how enslaved Africans managed to transport seeds such as okra and black-eyed peas into the Atlantic Ocean when they became useful to them as a form of cultural resistance and survival, they hid or sewed them into their clothing. In Americas, seeds were identifying giveaways; they were life ethers when remembering and tracing oneself in the darkness of slavery. Lauren's relationship with seeds harkens back to that history: To her, they are inheritance, responsibility and promise to an imagined community. Furthermore, planting the seeds has a psychological response to trauma. Trauma theorist Cathy Caruth (2016) theorizes that survival involves a negotiation to remember the past and create the future (a struggle to reclaim time from a rupture). Planting is made one of agency in a lost body of the world. Rather than doing from response to cataclysm, Lauren cultivates possibility. This act is in conversation with recent ecological futurism, where many scholars, such as bell hooks (2021), have been centering land stewardship and cultivation as an act of resistance, of healing, and of world

building. Ultimately, seeds are a metaphor and method used in the novel. They are symbols of continuity in rupture, hope in collapse and world-making in destruction. Carrying and planting seeds, Lauren acts out Earthseed's most important truth, namely survival is not about passive endurance but an active and imaginative way of creating a future.

Farming as Community and an Ethics of Care

Farming in *Parable of the Sower* is not a matter that does not work as a mere survival flaw but the basis of ethics and politics where the community of Lauren Olamina is built. Agriculture derives in this sense, thus from a praxis of belonging within what Avtar Braithwaite has called (1996) "diaspora space" in which displacement, trauma and futurity intersect. Food cultivation in Acorn provides a shocking contrast to the virulent individualism that exists outside its borders in the world at large, a world that runs on principles of extraction and barrenness, and predatory ethos of eat or be eaten. In Acorn, in this case, survival is deliberately translated as being inter-dependent; food production arises as being that through which strangers become kin and makes survival a mutual affair.

This transformation is enhanced with the theological dimension. Earthseed destroys the barriers between the religious and material believing that "God Is Change" (Butler 1993). There is therefore ritual of farming: repetition, work, nurturing work to create the moral order. The struggle for the founding of the community to plant trees, irrigate land and save seed resonates the greater destiny of Earthseed "to take root among the stars," to make a connection between the intimate action of touching soil and a cosmic and speculative future. Lauren writes:

> "Embrace diversity."
> Unite
> Or be divided, robbed, ruled, killed
> By those who see you as prey" (Butler,1993, p. 196).

Growing food in this way enacts this mandate: unity becomes survival, and diversity becomes strength.

This is in line with the articulation of a care ethic, one that puts at the centre of social and political concerns an attention to human and ecological interdependence. Recent scholarship reconceptualizes care as something more demanding than a logic of nurturance, emphasizing instead its entanglement with ethical, affective, and material practices that shape how worlds are sustained. Care, in this sense, emerges not merely as support but as a situated engagement that can unsettle dominant neoliberal frameworks which often externalize responsibility and normalize detachment (Jerak-Zuiderent, 2018, p. 55). In this sense, Acorn's agriculture may be made into a counter-hegemonic practice by growing food and disrupting systems of domination, scarcity, and dispossession.

Besides, farming serves as collective memory and speculative continuity. Read through the lens of Black agrarian futurism, *Parable of the Sower* stages agricultural labour and survival practices as modes of re-establishing relational ties to land, community, and ecological knowledge. Lauren Olamina's Earthseed philosophy and the collective cultivation of Acorn foreground how land-based practices function not merely as subsistence strategies but as epistemic and political reorientations for subjects shaped by histories of displacement, precarity, and systemic violence (Sunday & Akung, 2022, p. 10). In Parable, farming thus serves not as regression to a pre-industrial past but rather as an alternate track toward a liberated future hinged on resilience and ecological stewardship. Ultimately, agriculture is the living embodiment of Earthseed's theology: to shape change intentionally through care, reciprocity, and collective survival. In a fragmented world, farming is at once resistance and re-worlding; the material and spiritual act through which community is cultivated and a new future is made possible.

Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home*: The Carrier Bag Utopia and Thick

Description

Le Guin presents a post-collapse future not of scarcity, but of abundance and sustainability, where food has become so fully integrated into the cultural fabric that it becomes the main mechanism for ritual storytelling and the means to guarantee seamless intergenerational continuity.

An Anthropological Utopia and the Carrier Bag Narrative

Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985) is not a novel in the conventional sense of a unified plot and singular hero but rather an ethnographic archive of the Kesh, a post-apocalyptic people inhabiting California's Napa Valley long after the fall of the "City of Man" (Le Guin, 1985/2019). The text assembles songs, maps, myths, recipes, dramas, and anthropological field notes into a composite portrait of Kesh life. Everyday practices, language, art, ritual, and centrally food become the main structuring principle of the work rather than being the background for heroic action. Ecocritical scholarship has emphasized how speculative worlds grounded in ecological reciprocity and non-hierarchical social forms challenge dominant narratives of progress and control. Read in this light, *Parable of the Sower* resonates with ecofeminist interpretations that foreground relational survival, care, and community-building under conditions of environmental and social collapse (Garlick & King, 2022, p. 6–7).

This formal experiment enacts directly the argument Le Guin makes in "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction" (1986). There she suggests that the first human cultural tool was likely a container for gathered food, not a weapon of attack, and that narrative should likewise be imagined as a "bag" holding many lives and events rather than a spear thrusting toward victory (Le Guin, 1986/2019). "A book holds words. Words hold things. They bear meanings" (p. 169), she writes, suggesting that the "natural" shape of story is capacious, multiple, and sustaining rather than linear and violent. *Always Coming Home* narrativizes just such a carrier bag, gathering the "stuff" of Kesh existence, stories, tools, crops, cooking methods, seasonal feasts, into a textual container whose main work is to hold and circulate meaning.

Recent scholarship has read this carrier-bag form in explicitly spatial and ecological terms. Garlick and King (2022) argue that *Always Coming Home* offers a "geography beyond the Anthropocene," in which place is not an inert backdrop, but a web of reciprocal relations, a mode of "topophilia for survival." (Garlick & King, 2022, p. 6). The collage-like structure, moving among recipes, agricultural notes, and communal meals, maps an ethics of dwelling in which subsistence agriculture, careful water use, and shared food rituals anchor the Kesh's postcapitalist world. Medlicott (2022) also shows, the text's generic hybridity underwrites an ecofeminist politics in which care, interdependence and reproductive labour, which includes food preparation, is central to utopian imagination: ethnography, lyric, speculative fiction. Thus, the Kesh's food practices are part of a content and logic of his/her. Repetitive episodes of before harvest, of the preparation and the sharing of food forms an anthropology of sustenance that replaces the tale of the voyage of the hero. the utopia of *Always Coming Home* is not a perfect model but a continuous exercise of shared dwelling in a fallen world, a world that reinstates narrative in the direction of conquest, but instead of conquering, with its more tedious, long-lasting project in retrieval and preservation. In Le Guin's story of the carrier bag, food is not just a note in the unfolding of world-building, it is the medium by which another kind of sociality, a different kind of shape of story, is imaginable.

Thick Description of the Kesh Culinary Ethos

The Kesh have mealtimes that are a culture that has been painstakingly documented but it is a

philosophy of balance, of reciprocity and being embedded within their ecological world. As always, *Always Coming Home* is not an account of what eating practices this people, but, rather, Le Guin formalizes them as cultural epistemologies. Recipes, seasonal songs and minute descriptions of agricultural labour permeate the text in which the normal acts of cooking and eating are encoded systems of knowledge. This style of method is based on what Clifford Geertz (1973) famously conceptualized as "thick description," which is an interpretive framework that is sensitive to those layers of interpretations that are embedded in social practices, p. 7. In this case, acorn mush is not merely such a recipe but a form of story to which an environment is memorised and a ritual morality and an education across generations are deposited.

Le Guin's literary-ethnographic approach thus precedes and conforms to more recent studies of food anthropology, or especially those studies done under the aegis of Indigenous and Ecofeminist knowledge systems. In the frames of Indigenous nature, on TallBear's (2020) account, there is no way to talk about food outside the context of relations of care, sovereignty and land-based belongingness. So too does author Le Guin develop a comprehensible alternative conception of knowledge (the Kesh produce food as an ethical act of cohabitation and not extraction). Their rhythms are agrarian and centre around slowness, nature cycles and mutual sustainability regarding technocratic visions of the food futures, which quite often scientists present in the science fiction (Tsing, 2015).

This mode of placing food as ethnographic archive brings about the idea of historiography not with writing, thus offering a reflection of historiography as lived connotation imprinted on the muscles, the hands, and rhythms with which we grind acorns or knead dough, obtained in shared representation of collective meal. As Le Guin (1985) puts it, "the Kesh were not a thin people" (p. 156); that is, a literal and ideational description. It gives a signal of a utopian imaginary in which food abundance is normalised - where places of food abundance in physical/material, cultural and relational connections replace places of hunger and hunger/famine as structuring logic. In contrast with dystopian narratives in which hunger sets the limits for both power and survival, in the world of the Kesh, food is commons, a place of celebration and not hunger. Recent scholarship on the speculative, climate fiction, supports such reading. Food practices, as Dillon (2023) reminds us have become, in the last few years, speculative structures to imagine ecologically just futures in literature. Le Guin's subjection of ritualized eating, seasonal gathering and collective preparing may well foreshadow these literary movements, and serve as evidence of how food figures as something doing more than figuration, and standing instead as an organizing principle of world making.

Ritual as Mnemonic Bridge and Utopian Practice

Le Guin appears to demonstrate that culture is not preserved by monuments, archives, and codified rule but through the joyous repetition of everyday ritual. In *Always Coming Home*, the Kesh ensure their memory and their identity will continue by baking bread, brewing beer, gardening communal food and celebrating the seasonal return of the salmon. What these are is not nostalgic re-enactments, it is practice of embodied mnemonics a moving archive where the body holds on to that which the mind may violate-the memory of a past so extreme that it has left an impression on personal biological memory. The food is the ideal tool of cultural sustained in this framing due to the fact that this is so because it is multi-sensory, repeatable and that it is communally needed and an anthropological work supports this framework. Connerton (1989) famously argued that societies remember in terms of habitual body practices or practices rather than histories written. The current can continue to develop this standpoint because recent scholarship in food anthropology observes that culinary traditions serve as so-called mnemonic infrastructures tying the collective memory to material practice (Counihan & Siniscalchi, 2014; 2023). In this perspective, a Kesh harvest song that has been accompanied during grain grinding is not just an activity of singing what it is a container of volatized history, relations and meanings of the world. It becomes, what Pierre Nora would call a milieu de

memoire, a living environment of memory so completely embodied that it is not attached to a monumental site to permanently preserve it.

Le Guin's world reflects Tom Moylan's theorization of the critical utopia, which is "aware of the limits of utopia itself" yet is committed to a purposeful, imaginative restructuring of society (47). The Kesh are not portrayed as perfect, nor do they offer a post-scarcity techno-futurist solution. Instead, their food system cyclical, reciprocal, and ritualized offers a sustained critique of capitalist extractives and industrialized consumption. Utopia is accordingly not imagined as a perfected end-state but as a continuing practice, made again every day through relational food work. More recently, ecological thinkers have recognized Le Guin's prescience. Haraway (2016) identifies Le Guin's narrative strategy as one of "staying with the trouble," proposing futures rooted in interdependence rather than domination. Recent food studies scholars, too, insist that sustainable futures may emerge not from sweeping technological innovation but from reviving ritualized food ecologies grounded in care, restraint, and reciprocity (Patel & Moore, 2020; Tsing, 2021). In Le Guin's vision, then, ritual is not just symbolicit is world-making. Through embodied food practices, the Kesh reenvision survival not as mastery over the environment but as mutual becoming with it. Culture persists because it is performed, shared, and rendered edible.

Comparative Analysis: The Mnemonic Spectrum of the Speculative Palate

Read together, Atwood, Butler, and Le Guin create a spectrum on which food becomes a speculative historiographical medium, encoding memory, identity, and futurity in different but mutually illuminating ways. In Margaret Atwood's *The Year of the Flood* (2009), food is principally a site of biopolitical struggle. Corporate bioengineering and monopolized food systems instantiate Foucault's (1978) notion of biopower, in which biological life, bodies, ecologies and appetites are governed through the management of nourishment. In this regime, the practices of the God's Gardeners-seed banking, rooftop cultivation, ritual foraging, seasonal feasts-operate as what Nixon (2011) calls counter archives to the "slow violence" of environmental degradation, (p. 6).

These practices also recall Scott's (2007) concept of "infrapolitics," the realm of small, everyday acts of refusal that operate beneath the threshold of official recognition (p. 19). Cooking with foraged plants, saving heirloom seeds, and singing hymns to ecological "saints" form a hidden transcript of resistance to corporate bio capitalism. Read through Haraway's (2016) posthuman ethics, the Gardeners' multispecies stewardship reframes food as a relational archive that teaches subjects to "stay with the trouble" rather than seek technological escape (p. 65). Food here is not only sustenance but ecological pedagogy: a slow, embodied mode of remembering and relearning damaged environments.

In Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993), food, particularly seeds and small-scale farming, takes on another but related role. It becomes a diasporic technology of survival and renewal. As Lauren Olamina journeys across a landscape of racialized precariousness and climate devastation, gardening becomes world-making: the material practice through which she assembles a fragile, multi-ethnic community. Within an Afrofuturist frame, food encodes a futurity rooted in ancestral knowledge. Nelson (2002) describes Afrofuturism as a method of envisioning possible worlds through a Black cultural perspective while rethinking past and present anew, (p. 9), and Butler's use of seeds is closely aligned with this approach.

(1993) and Brah (1996) have argued, food can be seen as a mobile archive of memory that sustains identity through displacement. In this regard, the artist's use of seeds that she plants is similar to Harris's historical narrative of how enslaved Africans transported seeds as a form of cultural preservation. Butler develops agriculture into a social contract: feeding others

engenders obligations, reciprocity, and mutual dependency. Trauma studies further develop this reading. Seeds function as affective anchors through which collective trauma is metabolized and oriented toward futurity; this notion resonates with Caruth's contention that trauma is an unresolved wound nonetheless transmissible and constitutes an opening toward new narratives. In Butler, therefore, food represents both a symptom and a remedy of catastrophe, a means of negotiating injury while imagining alternative futures. A third, utopian register is offered by Ursula K. Le Guin's *Always Coming Home* (1985/2019), in which food becomes a ritualised medium of cultural continuity rather than a direct site of conflict. Le Guin's "carrier bag theory" of fiction reframes narrative, and by extension culture, as something sustained through gathering, storing, and sharing rather than conquest (Le Guin, 1986/2019, p. 153). Everyday Kesh practices of baking, brewing, harvesting, and communal eating are rendered through what Geertz (1973) calls "thick description," where minute detail reveals dense layers of cosmology, kinship, and value (p. 10). Food memory as such is so interiorized that it ensures the transgenerational transmission of the norms and ethics. This relates to the idea by Moylan (2018) called the "critical utopia" which is a formation that does not neglect its own limits and instead bases justice and collective flourishing on its everyday ongoing practice and not abstract doctrine (p. 47). Throughout these three stories, recipes, seeds, ritual meals are revealed which stand out as mnemonic codes in terms of preservation and performance of history, identity and ethics. Sutton (2001) says, "culinary memory is not just symbolic but somatic" (7), born out in the Gardener hymns, Lauren's seed pouch and the Kesh harvest songs, in which bodies become living archives of speculative possibility. This culinary novum operates as a narrative device that unsettles taken-for-granted assumptions about food practices, enabling readers to perceive the infrastructural, ethical, and political dimensions embedded within everyday alimentary regimes (Dillon & Craig, 2023, pp. 2–3). Ultimately, it is seen, that in these speculative futures, survival is not only a caloric intake, but the cultural aspect of the sustenance, biopolitical bargain of what is archives of continuation, diasporic carriage or utopian ritual.

Conclusion: Toward a Speculative Ethics of Nourishment and Survival

The power of speculative fiction, however, does not lie in the fact that it offers a possibility to catastrophize but to serve as a rehearsal space for cultural survival and ethical reconstruction and world making imagination. Reading Atwood, Butler, and Le Guin, using the concepts of food studies, cultural memory, and diasporic theory shows that it makes obvious food in speculative fiction socio-cultural is much more than some atmospheric detail, or narrative decoration but becomes a key epistemological device, and a narrative grammar, for dreaming otherwise. As in each of the texts, to consume, cultivate, store, and distribute food is impossible to distinguish between the manner in which communities are Wording their past and current, expressing their identities and projecting their futures. Thus, the apparently simple question, "How will we feed ourselves?" becomes inevitable in the more profound existential question: "Well, who are we, who do we hope to be?"

Food is transformed into historiography through such fantastic landscapes and it is a cultural repository which is not written in ink but in seeds, recipes, rituals and embodied memory. In Atwood's dystopian future, food practices create an infrapolitical counter-archive against corporate biopower and environmental amnesia, and a way of being resilient in the face of slow violence of environmental collapse. Nixon observes that "both the causes and the memory of catastrophe readily fade from view," underscoring how slow violence operates through temporal dispersal and systemic invisibility (Nixon, 2011, p. 9). In Butler's Afrofuturist narrative food is made into a diasporic memory, carrying and futurity producing; making gardens and seed keeping caretaking, resistive, and as a form of speculative community building. In this ethnographic utopia Le Guin's work, ritualized food activities found their most stable world view in a history in which continuity, reciprocity and ecological harmony were not get-and-forgotten, but experienced. Together, these authors make the case for a continuum

for the operation of food across the dichotomies of survival vs. meaning, hunger vs. history, sustenance vs. speculation. Movements from scarcity to stewardship, trauma to care, extraction to reciprocity are a way out of the domination narratives, moving to what Haraway has called "staying with the trouble" which is usually choosing entanglement rather than escape, interdependence rather than isolation, memory over forgetting. Here, food is also not passive matter but rather a (vital) agent through which the ethical possibilities and structures relational communal destinies.

Theorizing food as speculative historiography is therefore to tackle food as a carrier bag of memory, culture and possibility that cuts down to Le Guin's futurity of the heroic. A speculative palate which serves as method: One of tasting unrealized worlds, testing models of co-existence, positioning which might turn out liveable, just, worth cultivating. Recipes are more spectacular than manifestos, vegetables are disarming rather than arming, and communal meals are the microstructures of collectivism. Speculative fiction, trains us to see that it's not innovation, it's hardily practiced ways in which communities materially, culturally and ethically nourish themselves that will ensure other worlds. What these texts insist on is the following; survival is not about calories or technology, instead it is about memory, belonging and care. To prepare for the future is not only to give power to engineer food it is also to cultivate relationships with land with history relationships with community and relationships with life beyond the human. It is here that the genres of speculative fiction are to be perceived as not only a genre but also a pedagogical and ethical horizon a space in which the seeds of potential futures are planted and nurtured and then tried.

References

Abbots, E.-J. (2017). *The agency of eating: Mediation, food and the body*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Assmann, J. (2011). *Cultural memory and early civilization*. Cambridge University Press.

Atwood, M. (2009). *The Year of the Flood*. McClelland & Stewart.

Boym, S. (2001). *The future of nostalgia*. Basic Books.

Assmann, J. (2011). *Cultural memory and early civilization*. Cambridge University Press.

Braidotti, R. (2019). *Posthuman knowledge*. Polity Press.

Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of diaspora: Contesting identities*. Routledge.

Bruno, T. (2024). *Black ecological relations and methodologies. Progress in Environmental Geography, 3*(3), 271–285. SAGE Publications.

Butler, O. E. (1993). *Parable of the Sower*. Four Walls Eight Windows.

Canavan, G. (2016). *Octavia E. Butler*. University of Illinois Press.

Caruth, C. (2016). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Colmon, C. D., Jr. (2020). *On becoming: Afrofuturism, worldbuilding, and embodied imagination* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Delaware).

Connerton, P. (1989). *How societies remember*. Cambridge University Press.

Counihan, C., & Siniscalchi, V. (Eds.). (2014). *Food activism: Agency, democracy and economy*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Counihan, C., & Van Esterik, P. (2013). *Food and culture: A reader* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2019). *The costs of connection*. Stanford University Press.

De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge.

Dillon, S., & Craig, C. (2023). Storylistening: How narrative evidence can improve public reasoning about climate change. *WIREs Climate Change, 14*(1), e812.

Eshun, K. (2020). Further considerations on Afrofuturism. Duke University Press.

Fisher, M. F. K. (1943). *The gastronomical me*. Duell, Sloan and Pearce.
Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Vol. 1. An introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). Vintage Books.
Garlick, B., & King, L. (2022). *A geography beyond the Anthropocene: Ursula Le Guin's Always Coming Home as topophilia for survival.* Cultural Geographies, 29(1), 1–20.
Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.
Ghosh, A. (2018). *The great derangement: Climate change and the unthinkable*. University of Chicago Press.
Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.
Gomel, E., & Gurevitch, D. (Eds.). (2023). *The Palgrave handbook of global fantasy*. Springer Nature Switzerland
Hall, S. (1994). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 222–237). Lawrence & Wishart.
Haraway, D. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
Harris, J. B. (2011). *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
Heldke, L. (2003). *Exotic appetites: Ruminations of a food adventurer*. Routledge.
Holtzman, J. (2020). *Food and memory in cultural context*. Bloomsbury.
Johns-Putra, A. (2019). *Climate change and the contemporary novel*. Cambridge University Press.
Jerak-Zuiderent, S. (2018). Book review: *Matters of care: Speculative ethics in more than human worlds*, by María Puig de la Bellacasa. *Science & Technology Studies, 31*(2), 55–58.
Le Guin, U. K. (1985/2019). *Always Coming Home*. Library of America.
Le Guin, U. K. (1986/2019). The carrier bag theory of fiction. In *The last interview and other conversations*. Melville House.
Luckhurst, R. (2020). *The Cambridge companion to science fiction* (Updated ed.). Cambridge University Press.
Moylan, T. (2018). *Scraps of the untainted sky: Science fiction, utopia, dystopia*. Westview Press.
Nelson, A. (2002). Introduction: Future texts. In *Afrofuturism: A special issue of social text* (pp. 1–15). Duke University Press.
Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Harvard University Press.
Parasecoli, F. (2019). *Gastronativism: Food, identity, politics*. Columbia University Press.
Patel, R., & Moore, J. W. (2020). *A history of the world in seven cheap things*. Verso Books.
Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2017). *Matters of care*. University of Minnesota Press.
Ray, K. (2016). *The ethnic restaurateur and cultural memory*. NYU Press.
Rieder, J. (2017). *Science fiction and the mass cultural genre system*. Wesleyan University Press.
Scott, J. C. (2007). *Domination and the arts of resistance*. Yale University Press.
Shiva, V. (2024).The Nature of Nature: The Metabolic Disorder of Climate Change. Chelsea Green Publishing.
Sunday, O. N., & Akung, J. E. (2022). Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism: Black speculative writings in search of meaning and criteria. Research Journal in Advanced Humanities, 3(3).
Sutton, D. (2001). *Remembrance of repasts: An anthropology of food and memory*. Berg.
TallBear, K. (2020). Caretaking relations, not American dreaming. Duke University Press.
Tsing, A. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world*. Princeton University Press.
Wolfe, C. (2010). *What is posthumanism?* University of Minnesota Press.

Bio-note

Aishwarya Mehta is a research scholar in Gastronomy at Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (A

Central University), Chhattisgarh, India. Her research focuses on the intersections of food studies, trauma theory, memory studies, and diaspora studies. She examines how food functions as cultural memory, emotional archive, and a site of identity formation, particularly within displaced and marginalised communities. Her work explores how culinary traditions shape belonging, resilience, and collective consciousness across time and geography. Drawing from literary analysis, cultural theory, and interdisciplinary inquiry, she studies food as narrative, metaphor, and socio-political expression rather than merely material culture. Her broader research interest lies in understanding foodways as frameworks for negotiating history, affect, mobility, and cultural continuity, to contribute to the evolving discourse of food humanities within South Asian and wider Global South contexts.

Email ID: mehta.aishwarya2000@gmail.com

ORCID iD: 0009-0004-1795-8730